In 1928 the Congress passed a resolution urging the Princes to introduce responsible self-government based on representative institutions and the fundamental rights of citizenship. This was reaffirmed at Lahore in 1929. At the second Round Table Conference, Gandhi said that the Congress claimed to represent the whole of India and called upon the Princes to "find a place" for the "lowest classes[55] in any scheme that might be evolved, and to conciliate their subjects by conceding "some fundamental rights as the common property of all India." In a letter to Mr. N. C. Kelkar in 1934, Gandhi wrote that the policy of noninterference with the states was sound, and that British India had no more power to shape the policy of the states than it has in the case of Afghanistan or Ceylon. French India is part of geographical India as well as the states, but "we are powerless to shape the course of events there*" He added: "I would like the states to grant autonomy to their subjects and would like the Princes to regard themselves and be in fact trustees for the peoples over whom they rule, drawing for themselves solely a small and definite percentage of the income. . . . I do not seek to destroy their status. I believe in the conversion of individuals and societies." In another letter he said: "I detest corruption, high-handedness, unbridled autocracy as much as you or anyone else, but these are no monopolies of the Princes. . . . I am as impatient for radical reforms in the states as anyone can be. But I admit that my impatience is conditioned by my —or, if you will, our—patent helplessness. Between the subjects of the states and" of British India there is undoubtedly conscious identity of interests. The Princes as a class do not recognise it, unfortunately. They seem to believe in watertight compartments. In this they have the protection of British Law and British arms."

There can be no doubt that the successful operation of